



Dyess B-1s surge to 114 flights in 68 hours

10/15/2003 - **DYESS AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)** -- During a "surge" in flying here that ended Oct. 9, 7th Bomb Wing crews pushed their B-1 Lancers to a record-breaking 114 flights in 68 hours resulting in 321 simulated bombing runs on targets.

The crews began Operation Iron Thunder on Oct. 7, flying sorties around the clock until late in the night Oct. 9.

"Nothing like this has ever been done in the B-1 and, pending our historical analysis, it is quite possible that nothing like this has been done in the history of bomber aviation," said Col. Jeffrey Beene, 7th Operations Group commander.

A surge is defined as producing at least 50 percent more flying for a given period than is normally conducted, said Lt. Col. Pete Holcomb, 13th Bomb Squadron director of operations.

"For this surge, we produced more than 300 percent of the normal flying," he said.

Typically, fighter aircraft do more surge training than bombers because they are usually closer to the fight.

"We've known for a long time that B-1s could strike targets from long distances," said Col. Jonathan George, 7th BW commander. "We've also recently demonstrated the ability for them to stay in the air for long periods of time ... waiting for targets to arise. But this is the first time I know of where we've demonstrated the impressive amount of firepower in such a short period of time that we could potentially unleash on the enemy if needed."

Of the 114 flights, 107 were deemed "effective," meaning that if each of these B-1s carried a full load of 2,000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions, they would have put more than 2,500 bombs on target in less than three days. In comparison, it would have taken nearly 1,400 sorties by F-16 Fighting Falcons to drop the same number of JDAMs in the same amount of time, George said.

Eighteen B-1s and about 120 crewmembers played a part in the surge. The airmen flew missions over four ranges in Texas, New Mexico and Kansas. The missions were typical of those flown during operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.